

Message Text

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JCS:WFORRELL
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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 031132

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJECT: NAC CONSULTATIONS

REFS: A. STATE 14812, B. NATO 164, C. 76 NATO 4270,
D. NATO 569

1. REFTEL A CONCERNED SPECIAL NAC SESSIONS IN THE PERIOD
BEFORE THE SPRING MINISTERIAL. WE WILL BE ADDRESSING AT A
LATER TIME THE QUESTION OF FURTHER NAC CONSULTATIONS IN 1977
AFTER THE MAY MEETING OF MINISTERS. THIS CABLE CONTAINS
SOME INTERIM THOUGHTS ON NATO CONSULTATIONS ON ARMS CONTROL
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ISSUES AND MBFR.

2. WE ARE ATTRACTED TO YOUR SUGGESTION (REF B, PARA 4E)
THAT NAC MEETING WITH OFFICIALS FROM CAPITALS BE
DEVOTED TO GENERAL SUBJECT OF ARMS CONTROL EFFORTS. WHILE
WE BELIEVE THAT CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS PROVIDE AN ADEQUATE
OPPORTUNITY FOR EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON INDIVIDUAL ARMS

CONTROL ISSUES THAT WE MAY WISH TO DISCUSS WITH OUR ALLIES IN NATO, WE WANT TO EXAMINE CLOSELY YOUR IDEA OF SPECIAL NAC SESSION DESIGNED TO UNDERLINE OUR BROADER SUBSTANTIVE AND CONCEPTUAL APPROACH TO OVERALL ARMS CONTROL POLICY. IN STUDYING THIS IDEA, WE WILL KEEP IN MIND YOUR EARLIER

SUGGESTIONS FOR BROADENING RANGE OF ARMS CONTROL TOPICS FOR NAC CONSIDERATION (REF C, PARA 3H). MOREOVER, WE WILL NEED TO INSURE THAT CONCEPT OF SPECIAL NAC SESSION WOULD BE CAREFULLY DEFINED AND AGREED AMONG THE ALLIES IN ADVANCE. IN PARTICULAR, WE WOULD NOT WANT SUCH A MEETING TO BECOME A GENERAL ARMS CONTROL "CATCH ALL", OR MERELY AN ELEVATION OF CURRENT NATO DISARMAMENT EXPERTS SESSIONS TO NAC LEVEL. CONSULTATIONS ON ARMS CONTROL EFFORTS, OF COURSE, WOULD BE AFFECTED BY FUTURE OF DANISH PROPOSAL (REF D). GIVEN COMPLEXITY OF SUBJECT, WE ARE NOT LIKELY TO BE IN POSITION TO PROVIDE EARLY GUIDANCE, AND THEREFORE WE DO NOT FAVOR RAISING THE IDEA AT THIS TIME.

3. MBFR -- WE ARE GENERALLY PLEASED WITH NATO'S CURRENT CONSULTATIVE MACHINERY FOR MBFR. WE BELIEVE IT HAS FUNCTIONED WELL IN PAST AND, AT THIS STAGE, DOES NOT REQUIRE MAJOR CHANGE. WE WILL CONTINUE OUR ACTIVE CONSULTATIONS WITHIN MBFR WORKING GROUP, SPC AND NAC. AT THE MOMENT, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES BEFORE ALLIANCE CONCERNING MBFR WOULD BENEFIT FROM DISCUSSION AT NAC MEETING WITH OFFICIALS FROM CAPITALS DEVOTED SOLELY TO MBFR OR TO EAST-WEST RELATIONS (REF B, PARA 2). FOR EXAMPLE, WE DO NOT WANT TO PUT FRENCH IN CONFIDENTIAL

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POSITION WHERE THEY FEEL COMPELLED TO PRESS AT POLITICAL LEVEL CONTENTIOUS MBFR ISSUES THAT ARE BEST AVOIDED OR FINESSED FOR PRESENT. THIS WOULD NOT, OF COURSE, PRECLUDE NORMAL OPERATION OF NATO'S REGULAR CONSULTATIVE MACHINERY DEALING WITH MBFR ISSUES.

4. WE APPRECIATE RECEIVING MISSION'S THOUGH,-HROVOKING ANALYSIS IN USNATO 607 ON HANDLING OF DISARMAMENT ISSUES IN THE ALLIANCE.

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